

enter merchant types with corresponding spending limits that may be purchased using this card for a particular time period. For example, with regard to Figure 5, the controller may specify in a tabular or list form, the category or type of allowable purchase type 302, the budget amount 310, the budget period 320 for that budget amount, a total expenditure 330 for that category and a request field 340 such that the controller is informed whenever a expenditure is made in the corresponding row, which may be additionally based on the level of expenditure. In the example interface shown in Figure 5, the destination user (student) is limited to 10 dollars (312) a month (322) up to a maximum of 40 dollars (332) for music purchases. Food, clothing and entertainment (304) have similar values limiting the manner in which the card may be used. The medical category (305) does not specify any limiting parameters but does request that the controller is informed (342) of any expenditure made. Any type of notification may be made to the controller by the system such as via electronic mail, pager notification, etc. The integration of this functionality with the output from the point of sale equipment and other types of charge capable devices allows detailed review of all transactions by the controller. The destination user may be restricted geographically or to buy from the categories entered, or alternatively other categories left unspecified may have either no limits or default limits. For example a percentage of the total available balance may be applied to a miscellaneous category until the cash equivalent card balance is depleted.

This same functionality may be used to manage office expenditures where the planned expenditures may be planned into the system and where expenses incurred can be monitored